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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (07/15): Palestinian Factions Must Show Seriousness to Achieve National Reconciliation

Main Stories:

Al-Quds leads with wire reports on President Barack Obama's comments after his July 13 meeting with Jewish leaders that he believes differences between the US and Israel concerning the cessation of settlement activities in the Palestinian territories has narrowed. Al-Ayyam and Al-Hayat al-Jadida report on their front pages that President Obama intends to visit Israel to assure them that the US is committed to their security and to peace in the Middle East. Al-Ayyam quotes President Obama noting that "the establishment of the Palestinian state will not only serve the Palestinians, but Israeli interests as well."

Al-Quds runs front page coverage on Egypt's extending invitations to Palestinian factions to meet in Cairo on July 18 to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the national dialogue talks. According to Hamas spokesperson Fawzi Barhoum, "this meeting will focus on assessing the commitments of all parties to the national unity."

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida leads with news on preparations for holding the Sixth Fatah Party Congress. Senior Fatah leader Ahmad Qureia conducted a series of meetings with all of the conference preparatory committees to continue the preparations for holding the conference as planned on August 4th.

Al-Ayyam leads with news of Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Salam Fayyad announcing on July 14 that the World Bank has approved the allocation of \$40 million as direct support to the PA budget. The World Bank representative and PM Fayyad also signed an agreement on July 14 in Ramallah for transferring more than \$33 million to the PA to implement several development projects in the

West Bank and Gaza. This allocation is part of the pledges announced during the Sharm Al-Sheikh Conference.

Al-Ayyam runs inside coverage on the July 14 visit of US General Paul Selva accompanied by senior US officials from the US Consulate General in Jerusalem to Hebron governorate, during which they met with the head of the Hebron reconstruction committee Khaled Qawasmi and other dignitaries. Qawasmi briefed the US delegation on the economic and political difficulties facing the governorate.

The dailies front page news on Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas's meetings with the presidents of Sudan and Cuba in Sharm Al-Shiekh on July 14. Abbas briefed the two presidents on the recent developments in the Palestinian territories and the efforts exerted to achieve national reconciliation and lift the Gaza siege in order to proceed with Gaza reconstruction.

All dailies report on the visit of Tony Blair to the West Bank city of Nablus on July 14. Blair noted to the press during the visit that "the national economy in Nablus is improving and this indicates that the Palestinians can build their independent state." Coverage also noted that Blair stated the Palestinians must have fewer restrictions in order to support reaching a political solution.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Al-Quds independent daily runs an editorial under the title, "The Israeli tactic to waste time" (07/15): "The international community must not allow Netanyahu to waste more time in responding to the

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demands of the US administration. This could be done through exerting more pressure on the Israeli Prime Minister to get him seriously engaged in the peace process."

2) Naji Shurrah opines in Al-Quds independent daily, under the title " Hamas and Fatah... the failure of the national dialogue" (07/15): "The several dialogue sessions have revealed that disagreements between Hamas and Fatah still exist...The two factions are stuck in a vicious cycle and instead of showing their good intentions to narrow their differences, we see more measures that harm the national reconciliation efforts, which give Israel every latitude to continue with its violations against the Palestinians."

WALLES